

# Forging Partnerships for Virginia's Future



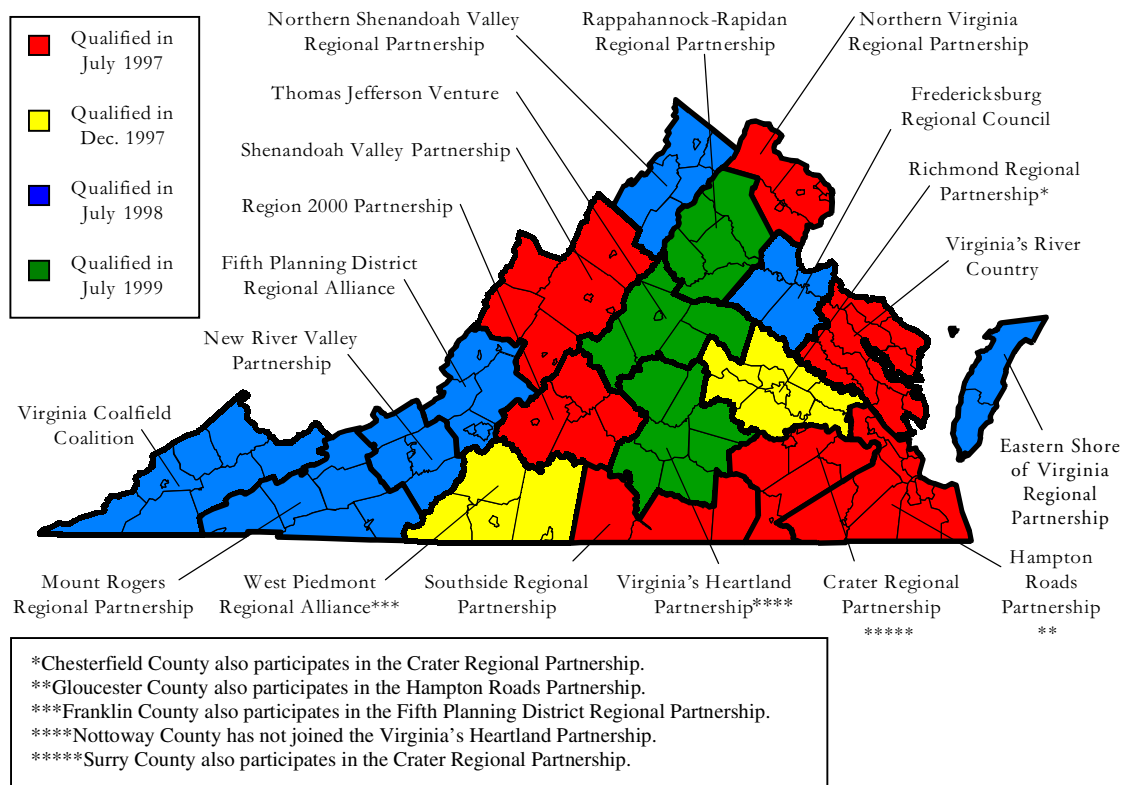
Department of Housing and  
Community Development

December 2000



Regional Competitiveness Program

## Regional Competitiveness Act Qualifying Regional Partnerships as of July 1999



In 1996, the General Assembly passed two bills advanced by the Urban Partnership to help local governments overcome barriers to greater regional cooperation. Among these was the Regional Competitiveness Act, an innovative solution to address multi-jurisdictional issues. Through the Act, incentive funds are provided to regions to help address their competitiveness issues.

The Regional Competitiveness Act (RCA) charged Virginia communities with establishing regional partnership organizations to strategically evaluate the economic competitiveness issues in their respective regions and work toward potential solutions. The partnership boards, composed of local business leaders, education representatives, citizens, and elected officials, were created to develop a vision for bringing together various interests for the good of the entire region.

The incentive fund, which is administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, allocates money on a per capita basis to qualifying regional partnerships. Once a partnership qualifies for aid, it is guaranteed payments for five years so

long as it is functioning effectively and funds are appropriated to the RCA program. Already, over \$38 million has been awarded to the various regional partnerships to address their economic competitiveness issues.

The Regional Competitiveness Act has made a difference. No longer are localities faced with the "winner takes all" mentality that often accompanies growth and economic development. They are now encouraged to look beyond their own backyards and seek solutions for the entire region.

**But, the work has just begun. Breaking new ground takes a long-term commitment.**

To better understand all that has been accomplished as a result of the **Regional Competitiveness Act**, it is useful to review the successes of the existing partnerships. Their efforts, achieved through cooperation with their local partners, have been extraordinary and are making Virginia stronger.

## Education

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "I look to the diffusion of light and education as the resource most to be relied on for ameliorating the conditions, promoting the virtue and advancing the happiness of man." Those Jeffersonian ideals still ring true. Education is the key to Virginia's future. And the regional partnerships are responding.

The **Mount Rogers Regional Partnership** sponsored a television campaign encouraging residents to take a free Graduate Equivalency Degree test. Residents who do not pass the test can enroll in a preparation program and retake the test as part of the Mount Rogers Adult Education Program. The Partnership's goal is to reduce by half the 24 percent of workers in the region without high school diplomas by 2010.

The **Shenandoah Valley Partnership** helped finance the start-up of the Bath/Highlands Distance Learning Centers in conjunction with the Rural Utility Service. Residents of the two communities will now be able to take advantage of secondary and adult workforce training programs as well as traditional workforce training programs at Blue Ridge and Dabney S. Lancaster Community Colleges, James Madison University, and other secondary school divisions via Network Virginia. The **New River Valley Partnership** helps fund the Technology Magnet School, a joint effort of five secondary schools in the area and New River Community College, to prepare students for high technology careers.

The **Northern Virginia Regional Partnership** created a summer information technology training program at Northern Virginia

Community College, George Mason University, Virginia Tech Northern Virginia Center, and Marymount University for middle and high school students. The technology-focused curriculum is oriented to Virginia's eighth grade Standards of Learning and is giving participants new information technology skills and urging them to consider future work and careers in the region's technology industry.

The **Northern Virginia Regional Partnership** also funded the creation of 10 Cisco Systems Local Networking Academies in seven public school districts in northern Virginia. The national program provides high school juniors and seniors with the information technology and network skills training that is in great demand throughout the region. At least 325 students are expected to participate in this program during the next two years.

The **Crater Regional Partnership** helped fund the Appomattox Regional Governor's School for the Arts and Technology, which offers classes for academically and artistically gifted ninth-through twelfth-grade students. The facility will serve as a regional cultural center at night.

The **Hampton Roads Partnership** has funded "Square One" to work with local social service agencies on early childhood development issues. Nearly a quarter of the region's children enter kindergarten unprepared for basic schoolwork, thus impairing their futures and threatening the region's economic competitiveness. Square One has been able to leverage the Partnership's RCA funding with \$115,000 in direct grants, including one from the Bank of America Foundation, to support efforts to reduce this percentage. Program activities have included a billboard and transit card campaign promoting parental reading to young children, training sessions for local government staff in implementing parent education and support programs, and a web site ([www.SqOne.org](http://www.SqOne.org)) to connect programs and services.

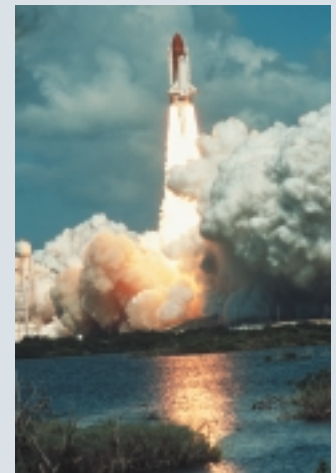


*The Fifth Planning District Regional Alliance started a Saturday school for the children of Japanese executives working in the Roanoke area. The school will help them stay current with Japanese language and culture and attract other companies to the region. A number of students have participated, including those whose parents are employed at Dynax, Koyo, and Yokohama Tire, some of the region's largest employers.*

## Eastern Shore Spaceflight Academy

An initiative of the **Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Partnership**, the Spaceflight Academy was created in 1998 to raise awareness of the NASA Wallops Island launch facility, to encourage student interest in aerospace, and to attract new tourists to Virginia's scenic Eastern Shore. Modeled after the U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama, students attend one-week sessions and live in U.S. Navy dorms while studying spaceflight. They watch simulated operations from the NASA mission control room and assemble and launch model rockets. Students also receive classroom instruction in space science and physics.

According to Greg Manter, director of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Economic Development Commission and chair of the Regional Partnership Task Force, "Without the regional partnership coming together and instigating the program, as well as providing some funds for planning and operations, it probably would never have gotten off the ground." ■



# The B.I. Chemicals, Inc. Apprenticeship Program

**A** strong commitment to workforce excellence has long been central to B.I. Chemicals' corporate philosophy. So when the leaders of the **Crater Regional Partnership** determined that workforce preparedness was one of the region's most important competitiveness issues, a partnership with B.I. Chemicals was a natural fit.

The result is a student apprenticeship program in cooperation with John Tyler Community College and Petersburg Public Schools. Participating students earn college credits, and the cost

of their tuition and books is covered. Upon completion, they become certified chemical technicians and qualify for jobs at B.I. Chemicals.

The program includes instruction in mathematics, applied physics, chemistry, biology, machine blueprint reading, and college composition; computer training; and handling techniques for hazardous chemicals, materials, and waste in the workplace. ■



## Workforce Development

Developing a trained and qualified workforce has long been a top priority of the economic development community to ensure Virginia's competitiveness. Many of the regional partnerships have worked to close the gap between what schools teach and what the business community demands in order to respond to this need.

A first step for many partnerships was to survey area employers to assess workforce training needs and the availability of workers. Over 3,000 employers responded to the survey conducted by the **Hampton Roads Partnership**, the results of which are available through an interactive Web site ([www.usworks.com/hamptonroads](http://www.usworks.com/hamptonroads)).

The **Richmond Regional Planning District Commission Competitiveness Committee** funded **WORKFORCE ONE**, an initiative created with the Greater Richmond Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Richmond Partnership. **WORKFORCE ONE** is using the Internet to develop a community operating system, which will link more effectively and efficiently the region's youth learning opportunities, workforce development, and social service entities to meet the recruiting, assessment, and training needs of businesses and

community services. The tools include Workforce Wizard, Pathfinder, Next Step, Tapestry, and a web portal for customized access for users. Partnering with J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, they created The Verizon Technotrain, a mobile unit housing state-of-the-art computers providing easily accessible training delivery to urban and rural communities and to remote and small business sites. Additional information about these programs is available at [www.wf1.org](http://www.wf1.org).

Many partnerships have initiated a WorkKeys program, a worker analysis tool that is widely endorsed by businesses across the country to evaluate the nature of certain on-the-job tasks and then determine worker skill levels. Follow up includes designing coursework to ensure that these workers meet the skill levels expected by area employers.

The **Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Partnership's** WorkKeys program, as well as its apprenticeship programs, are organized through Lord Fairfax Community College where 45 businesses sponsor employees to upgrade their skills in electrical contracting, plumbing, and industrial maintenance. The **Mount Rogers Regional Partnership** is coordinating a WorkKeys program through Wytheville Community College and Virginia Highlands Community College. **Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership** used RCA funds to support a WorkKeys program

at Central Virginia Community College that trained five job profile specialists. The funds were also used to leverage grant funds to purchase computer equipment and software to provide assessments and specialized training for vocational students.

The **Thomas Jefferson Venture** is working with local community colleges and school systems to coordinate a virtual information training program through the Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Center. The Venture has also contributed to Piedmont Virginia Community College's associate degree program for biotech research lab specialists, a profession in high demand in the Charlottesville area.

Linking worker training with the secondary education system has also been a priority. The **Fredericksburg Regional Council** has provided seed money for a Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation program that subsidizes summer internships for public school teachers. The internships allow teachers to spend time at area businesses and learn about the attitudes and ideas that the business community requires from employees, thus assisting in student development and workforce preparedness. The **Thomas Jefferson Venture** is supporting a program where students receive stipends to work in various industries.

**Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership** has supported the Advanced Manufacturing Technology Association (AMTA) that provides training for the machine and tool trade. The Partnership also supported the Wheels of Learning program to provide training to workers in the construction industry and to the Institute for Manufacturing Technology that provides distance-learning opportunities for engineers at local firms. The AMTA Technical Education Center was recently designated the Center of Excellence for High Performance Manufacturing by the Virginia Community College System.

The **Northern Virginia Regional Partnership** has funded several information technology training programs in cooperation with area colleges, universities, and private businesses. The programs have involved more than 4,300 students to date.

Regina Eason, a former welfare-to-work participant, is a beneficiary of the Tech Aid program supported by the **Northern Virginia Regional Partnership**. Applicants for this program competed for slots in a three month intensive training effort. Regina's training gave her accounting and informa-

tion technology skills that resulted in a job with Computer Sciences Corporation.

The **Northern Virginia Regional Partnership** collaborated with Sallie Mae to leverage private sector funds to create the Northern Virginia Information Technology Loan Fund, which provides low-interest loans to cover tuition and living expenses for adults training for information technology jobs. Already, over \$1 million in private loans have been arranged by Sallie Mae.

The **Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Partnership** initiated the "Career Partners" program in cooperation with the Culpeper Chamber of Commerce, the Culpeper public school system, and Germanna Community College that provides students with a comprehensive introduction to the business community through apprenticeships, mentoring, and shadowing programs. The program has instituted an Engineering and Technology Career Academy for 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders and a Mathematics and Language Arts accelerated program for at-risk students. Nearly \$280,000 in cash and in-kind contributions have supplemented the RCA funding for this program.

The **West Piedmont Regional Alliance's** strategic plan includes a "Regional Focal Points for Workforce Development Program" being coordinated by Patrick Henry Community College (PHCC). Through this program, three workforce training centers have opened across the region in addition to the new Frith Economic Development Center. The Frith Center, constructed at PHCC with \$1.5 million in private sector funding, serves as the nucleus of the entire program, which utilizes WorkKeys and the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment program.

The **Shenandoah Valley Partnership** led an effort to bring together local governments, private businesses, and the community college to fund a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning training center in Buena Vista. The **Southside Regional Partnership** has recently requested funding, including private and federal resources, for a mobile workforce training unit. This classroom on wheels — a Winnebago with thirteen computer bays for training exercises — is designed to



*"This position has allowed me to be more self-sufficient," Regina Eason said. "I've been thrilled with the program [and] I'm very pleased with what I've accomplished so far." A former welfare-to-work participant, Regina is a graduate of the Tech Aid program sponsored by the Northern Virginia Regional Partnership. Regina is shown here with her supervisor at Computer Sciences Corporation.*

complement the region's WorkKeys initiative by taking training facilities directly to employers.

Finally, **Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership** has launched a program to help people who have historically been unemployable to give them basic skills needed to find a job. The program is modeled after successful initiatives in other states, and the initial class of 10 people has begun. The Partnership has also provided initial funding for a Child Care Resource Center to act as a clearinghouse of working families to locate safe and affordable day care as well as assist with training of day care providers.

## Economic Development

The RCA funding prompted the creation of a regional economic development organization in the Virginia's Heartland region. A regional approach to marketing is critically important to these counties since they individually lack the resources to support a full-time marketing effort. **Virginia's Heartland Partnership** also held a successful rural economic summit, targeted to local government officials and business leaders, to discuss the benefits of a comprehensive economic development program.

RCA funds were also important in the creation of the Lake Country Marketing Council through the **Southside Regional Partnership**, a regional economic development group boosting Brunswick, Halifax, and Mecklenburg Counties. The Council helps to coordinate a region-wide marketing program that included brochures, advertisements, trade fairs, and marketing trips.

The **Hampton Roads Partnership** funded marketing trips to Detroit and Los Angeles for the purpose of attracting existing and potential Virginia Port Authority customers to relocate headquarters or other major operations centers to the region. The trips were part of a unique partnership among the **Hampton Roads Partnership**, the Virginia Port Authority, and the two regional economic development organizations, generating renewed interest in the region. The trips have inspired the participants to self-fund a third trip to Toronto, Canada.

## Roanoke River Regional Industrial Park

**D**uring the past five years, communities along Virginia's southern border have lured many new and expanding businesses to their region. The new businesses filled most existing industrial park space and consequently limited further economic development.

To overcome this problem, the **Southside Regional Partnership** has spearheaded a joint project with Mecklenburg and Brunswick Counties. Plans call for the development of a 240-acre park, the largest of its kind in the area, to be located near U.S. Route 58 two miles west of LaCrosse.

"It's cheaper for us to build one park between the two of us than for each of us to build our own," said Randolph Jones, Mecklenburg County's director of economic development. "We will share expenses and revenue. We are crossing new ground here."

Crossing new ground is the Regional Competitiveness Act's defining purpose. As a result of the Partnership's efforts, the park was awarded nearly \$1.3 million as one of the first recipients of support from the state's new Industrial Site Development Fund — a significant accomplishment for an area that only recently embraced regional cooperation. ■



## Industrial Site Development

Build it and they will come. When applied to industrial parks, having a supply of ready land and buildings is the key for future economic growth. Groups helping to develop regional industrial parks include **Virginia's Heartland Partnership**, **Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership**, the **Virginia Coalfield Coalition**, and **Virginia's River Country**.

One of the most innovative collaborations is the work of the **New River Valley Partnership** and the **Fifth Planning District Regional Alliance** to build the New River Valley Commerce Park in Pulaski County. Using new authority granted by the General Assembly in 1997, fifteen communities united to create Virginia's first Regional Industrial Facility Authority. Twelve of the localities are jointly planning the development of a 1,000-acre industrial park. A regional revenue-sharing agreement is central to this effort to bring new industry to the region.

The **Fifth Planning District Regional Alliance** is also paying for the preliminary engineering work for the planned Clifton Forge Brownfield Redevelopment Project. The Project seeks to rehabilitate and convert an abandoned parcel once part of the former railroad repair shops into a viable industrial area.

The **Shenandoah Valley Partnership** is working with the Rockbridge Partnership in

developing a plan for a 146-acre high-tech industrial research park called the Virginia Envirotechnology Center.

Lastly, the **Hampton Roads Partnership** is working with the cities of Chesapeake and Portsmouth to develop a proposal to build a joint business park on 500 acres of Navy-owned property on the border between the two cities. The St. Juliens Creek project is the first step in creating a partnership with the Navy for co-use of such properties and could become a national model for more effective use of these facilities.

## Small Business Development

Integral to the economic health of any community are innovative, thriving entrepreneurial endeavors. As a result, many partnerships are developing support networks and incubators to help start-up businesses take their ideas to the marketplace.

The **Virginia Coalfield Coalition** is supporting two business incubators in the area, and the **Shenandoah Valley Partnership** helped locate space and cover costs for NewBizVa, a business incubator serving Augusta County and the cities of Waynesboro and Staunton. The **New River Valley Partnership** helped fund the New River Valley Competitiveness Center in Pulaski County.



*The West Piedmont Regional Alliance helped fund the Dan River Business Development Center, a vital link in the region's effort to diversify its economy.*

One tenant has already graduated from the center and 75 new jobs were created. The **Crater Regional Partnership** and **West Piedmont Regional Alliance** are supporting a small business development center through Longwood College. The **Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Partnership** and the **Fredericksburg Regional Council** are conducting feasibility studies for the creation of small business incubators to serve their respective regions. **Virginia's River Country** helped expand the area's microenterprise program to provide small loans to entrepreneurs across the region.

The **Hampton Roads Partnership**, together with the Center for Innovative Technology (CIT), the Hampton Roads Technol-

## Marketing the Shenandoah Valley Together

**T**he majestic mountains and rolling farmlands of the Shenandoah Valley have been a destination for many years. Previous tourism marketing programs, however, have been unable to draw on the collective strength of the various localities in the region to adequately promote its historical sites and natural wonders. As a result, the **Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Partnership** stepped in to create a marketing organization that would disseminate a unified tourism promotion message.

"A place as beautiful as its name" serves as the slogan for the successful new marketing program, incorporating themes of history, family fun, and the outdoors. The group's Web site ([www.shenandoah.org](http://www.shenandoah.org)) serves as the Valley's electronic link to the world. Television commercials and newspaper inserts target senior adults and young families.

Because of the program, requests for information from potential visitors have tripled. Visitor profiles have also been compiled to create a database for Valley tourism attractions to use in their own marketing efforts. Tourism in the area is stronger than ever, supporting thousands of jobs. ■



ogy Council, and the region's universities, organized the Hampton Roads Technology Incubator (HRTI) for the purpose of commercializing technologies developed at NASA Langley. In creating the incubator, the Partnership used RCA funds, CIT funds, and in-kind support from the region's universities to obtain \$850,000 in NASA funding for the center. The HRTI is assisting 13 start-up businesses, with 36 employees, at its Hampton facility and is adding an additional incubator facility in South Hampton Roads.

With funding from the **Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Partnership**, the Eastern Shore Small Business Development Center has been established at Eastern Shore Community College. The Partnership also hosts e-commerce breakfast sessions every month that are targeted to the technology needs of small business.

Supporting existing industry is also important to a strong economy. That's why **Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership** helped establish an existing business alliance of 26 agencies throughout the region. The alliance created a directory of service providers that have been instrumental in helping businesses locate support services available in the region.

## Tourism Promotion

Virginia's tourism efforts received particular emphasis in Governor Gilmore's economic development plan, *The Virginia Strategy: Prosperity into the New Century*. Several partnerships are working toward accomplishing the goals of that plan. The **Fredericksburg Regional Council** has provided financial and technical assistance to the Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce's effort to develop a concept plan for a regional visitor center along Interstate 95. The Council is also exploring

the development of computerized kiosks to provide tourist information to visitors at attractions throughout the region.

**Virginia's River Country** created a non-profit corporation devoted to tourism and economic development marketing. The program included development of a promotional video, advertisements, brochures, participation in trade shows, and visits to other U.S. communities. These efforts have significantly raised the profile of the region as a great place to do business and to visit. The **Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Partnership** supported the Foothills Tourism Partnership to encourage travelers to visit the region. The group's website ([www.visitfoothills.org](http://www.visitfoothills.org)) features information on accommodations, historic sites, outdoor activities, wineries, restaurants, and shopping. The group has also produced a print advertising program and is distributing a brochure to people who call its toll-free information center. The **New River Valley Partnership** supported the creation of the New River Valley Visitors Alliance to promote regional tourism and recreational opportunities.



*The Fifth Planning District Regional Alliance is supporting the development of the Blue Ridge Interpretive Center to attract more of the tourists from along the Blue Ridge Parkway to the Roanoke region. The Center will provide to visitors information on the region's history, culture, and points of interest.*

## Technology Training Fuels Northern Virginia's Economy

**T**he leaders of the **Northern Virginia Regional Partnership** recognized that if the area is to maintain its status as a global center for the information technology industry, worker training and education must be top priorities. Therefore, the Partnership has worked to develop strong relationships with the region's technology community, including a joint initiative with the Northern Virginia Technology Council, to support efforts to train workers to develop specific skills needed by technology businesses throughout the region.

This collaborative effort, known as the Northern Virginia Technology Workforce Development Initiative, has the goal of creating a world-class, knowledge-based workforce that will attract other technology-related businesses to locate in northern Virginia. In addition to directly supporting education efforts at the region's colleges and universities, the Initiative has developed a Web site ([www.nvrp.org](http://www.nvrp.org)) that lists information technology job opportunities across the region. The Initiative also provides career assessment and development services and has developed the Summer Technology Program to get young people interested in technology fields. ■

*"The success of the Technology Workforce Development Initiative, that has been jointly undertaken with the Northern Virginia Technology Council, is a key economic development strategy. To prepare northern Virginia's current and future workers to both participate and succeed in knowledge-based technology employment is fundamental for ensuring our region's continued growth."*

Dr. Edward H. Bersoff  
Chairman, President and CEO  
BTG, Inc.

## Technology

**Virginia's Heartland Partnership** is partnering with Longwood College to create the region's own technology council that will assist with the development of infrastructure and training needs lacking in the rural counties of the region. In addition, the **Hampton Roads Partnership** funded and helped to create the Hampton Roads Technology Council (HRTC), an industry trade organization dedicated to promoting the region's technology interests. After two years in operation, the HRTC has met or exceeded virtually all of its goals identified in the RCA grant application.

The **Hampton Roads Partnership** also brought together the region's universities and federal laboratories to form the Hampton Roads Research Partnership (HRRP). The HRRP seeks to integrate more closely the research and development efforts of the region's universities and federal laboratories for the purpose of positioning Hampton Roads to compete with other technology regions throughout the world.

Complementing the local and regional marketing and planning activities, the develop-

ment of Geographic Information System (GIS) networks to electronically map local infrastructure, zoning, historic properties, wetlands, roads, and other data has proven to be an important economic development tool. The **Southside Regional Partnership** used its incentive funds for its GIS development for Brunswick, Mecklenburg, and Halifax Counties.

The **Hampton Roads Partnership** also funds a program to close the region's digital divide. The Hampton Roads Community Learning Center Network has established a network of 12 learning centers across Hampton Roads, and has identified 70 other candidate centers, to provide access to computer technology and training to children and adults. The Network will foster technology literacy as a foundation for workforce and economic development throughout the region. The **Northern Virginia Regional Partnership** has provided financial support for an effort between the Northern Virginia Technology Council and the America's Promise PowerUp initiative to create the Gum Springs Computer Center to serve children in the Route 1 corridor of the City of Alexandria and Fairfax County.



*The Southside Regional Partnership supported the expansion of the Mecklenburg-Brunswick Regional Airport. This new terminal includes a conference room for meetings with business prospects.*

## Transportation

**Virginia's River Country** has actively supported efforts to improve transportation in the Middle Peninsula. It was one of several groups to launch Bay Transit, a minibus operation that provides transportation services to almost half the region. It also helped fund a feasibility study for a Northern Neck airport and to move forward a plan for Middle Peninsula Regional Airport to operate under a regional airport authority with a revenue sharing agreement adopted by each of the five jurisdictions.

The **New River Valley Partnership** helped with the designation of the New River Valley Airport as a user fee airport and foreign trade zone, thus making it a more vital component of the region's economic infrastructure. Already, a number of companies have begun to use the zone to foster their international trade activities.

In 1999, the Hampton Roads region's two public transportation agencies, PenTran and Tidewater Rapid Transit (TRT), merged to form Hampton Roads Transit, perhaps the only voluntary merger between two transportation agencies in the United States. While much of the credit for the merger goes to the PenTran/TRT staff, the **Hampton Roads Partnership** endorsed the merger and recommended successful adoption of the binding agreement to each of the city councils involved. This endorsement was important in obtaining approval by several key councils and moving the initiative forward.

## Infrastructure

**Virginia's River Country** helped with agreements to upgrade water and sewer systems in Essex County and the Town of Tappahanock and with the creation of a sewer authority covering Westmoreland County and the Town of Montross. **Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership** helped initiate a project that will transfer water from Lynchburg to Appomattox County. The **Southside Regional Partnership** supported the creation of the Roanoke River Service Authority, which operates a regional water system for several communities in Brunswick and Mecklenburg Counties. The **Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Partnership** is supporting the development of a reuse

and recovery system that will improve the municipal waste water systems used by an industrial park in Cape Charles.

Finally, **Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership** is supporting a study of establishing a regional authority to oversee the operation of Lynchburg Regional Airport, regional solid waste disposal, a regional public safety radio system, and the regional jail system.

## Conclusion

"State funding for the Regional Competitiveness Program enables our localities to make investments that address key, fundamental issues that affect the whole community. Without this funding, localities will be ill equipped to do much more than deal with the symptoms of our problems rather than their underlying cause. In short, investment by the state enables us to take a broad, all-encompassing look at our communities and address pressing issues in a comprehensive, more permanent way."



*Richard G. Tilghman  
Vice Chairman  
SunTrust Banks, Inc.*

There is no doubt that the impact of the Regional Competitiveness Act has been substantial.

**But while much progress has been made, challenges remain. The experiment is just beginning to reap rewards. Continued support is critical. Our future depends on it. ■**

### Virginia's Regional Partnerships

*Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Partnership • Thomas Jefferson Venture • Shenandoah Valley Partnership • Virginia's Region 2000 Partnership  
Fifth Planning District Regional Alliance • New River Valley Partnership • Virginia Coalfield Coalition • Mount Rogers Regional Partnership  
West Piedmont Regional Alliance • Southside Regional Partnership • Virginia's Heartland Partnership • Crater Regional Partnership  
Hampton Roads Partnership • Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Partnership • Virginia's River Country • Richmond Regional Partnership  
Fredericksburg Regional Council • Northern Virginia Regional Partnership • Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Partnership*

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